

Virginia Commission for the Arts
Minutes
June 6-7, 2006
Martha Washington Inn, Abingdon

Members Attending: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs, Gary Grant, Susan Hirschbiel, Bonita Lestina, E. A. McMath, Roddy Moore, Rod Taylor, Beth Temple, Will Trinkle, and Deborah Valentine

Members Absent: Jackie Stone and Eve Wilson

Staff Attending: Peggy Baggett, Tatjana Franke Beylotte, and Foster Billingsley

Introduction

Dr. Ellsworth, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. He welcomed the Commissioners to Abingdon. Several Commissioners thanked Dr. Ellsworth for arranging the visit on the previous evening to the home of the McGlothlins and the tour of their art collection.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2006, meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Roddy Moore gave a history of the formation of The Crooked Road Music and the Blue Ridge Music Trails. He also discussed the issues of music licensing for the sites on the two Trails.

2006-2007 Grants Budget

Peggy Baggett gave an update on the General Assembly budget negotiations and explained the plan for preparation of the grant notification letters and for the first payments on the 2006-2007 grants.

Susan Hirschbiel proposed that additional funding be budgeted for the Teacher Incentive Grants.

Lu Ellsworth proposed that a minimal amount be budgeted for Poetry Out Loud to show that the Commission is supportive of this national initiative, although the state arts agencies have not yet been officially asked to coordinate this program again in 2006-2007. Peggy Baggett and Tatjana Beylotte reviewed some of the successes and problems of the pilot program in the Richmond metropolitan area. Gary Grant recommended that the Commission fund a series of workshops across the state on financial management in 2006-2007.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus to review the applications based on two scenarios - one, no increase in funding for the Commission in the new biennium, and two, the increase proposed by Governor Warner. In the event of other budget action, the Executive Committee of the Commission will meet to develop a new proposal for the grants budget and a new procedure for approving the individual grants.

Area I General Operating Support

No Commissioners attended the Area I panel meeting. Peggy Baggett reported that only four panelists attended the meeting. They were well prepared and thoughtful, but it is a concern when there are so few panelists to give different points of view. She then presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Appalachian Children's Theatre. David Briggs made a motion to approve Priority 1 funding for the Appalachian Children's Theatre, stating that the concerns about management cited by the advisory panelists were not unusual for a young organization. The organization is clearly providing a valuable service for young people in an area with limited opportunities in the arts. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Bristol Ballet and Theatre Bristol. The Commissioners discussed the recommendation of the advisory panel that the single large bequest received by each of these organizations not be included in eligible revenue for the operating support grants of these two organizations. Lu Ellsworth noted that the Commission guidelines do not exclude such bequests from eligible revenue but that the limited contributions from other sources is a concern. He made a motion to count as eligible revenue only the portion of the bequest used by each of these organizations for operating support in 2004-2005. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area I. The motion was seconded and approved with Lu Ellsworth abstaining on Pro Art Association.

Area I Project Grant

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the single Project Grant from Area I. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendation. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area II General Operating Support

Gary Grant praised the advisory panel, stating that the panelists asked good questions and were consistent in following the guidelines in making their recommendations.

Gary Grant made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the Area II General Operating Support applications. The motion was seconded and approved with Gary Grant abstaining on the Danville Concert Association.

Area II Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area II. She noted that three of the seven regional panels had struggled with applications from community schools of the arts and recommended that in the coming year the Policy Committee review the guidance to the panelists in evaluating these applications.

E. A. McMath made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area III General Operating Support

No Commissioners attended this panel meeting. Peggy Baggett reported that the meeting had gone well with many different points of view among the panelists.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Area III General Operating Support applications with the requirement that both the Jefferson Center and Opera Roanoke be reviewed by the advisory panel again in the spring of 2007. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area III Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Area III Project Grants.

Eastern Mennonite University/ Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival. David Briggs and Bonita Lestina noted that the application included the statement that the size of the orchestra would be reduced if there was not full funding for the application. It appears that a grant of \$2500 would ensure that the proposed soloist could perform at the Festival. David Briggs made a motion to award \$2500, contingent upon action by the General Assembly on the state budget.

E. A. McMath made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grants. The motion was seconded and approved with Will Trinkle abstaining on the Downtown Music Lab.

Area IVA General Operating Support

Bonita Lestina stated that the Area IVA panelists were knowledgeable and showed good judgement in their recommendations. She was concerned, however, that there was only one artist on the panel. David Briggs expressed concern that the panelists had not attended performances or events by many of the applicants and had to base their recommendations solely on the application materials. Beth Temple stated that having only four panelists present at the meeting was a disadvantage.

American Century Theatre. David Briggs made a motion to fund the American Century Theatre as a Priority 1 organization. He stated that the theatre does good work and that the panelists did not seem to have first hand knowledge of the quality of the productions. Other Commissioners noted the concerns of the panel about the lack of educational outreach. The motion was seconded and defeated, Yes -3, No - 5, Abstentions -3.

Reston Chorale. Bonita Lestina spoke of the high artistic quality of this chorus. Susan Hirschbiel noted that she would like to see the Commission develop a clear set of standards for reviewing applications from community choruses. David Briggs made a motion to award funding to the Reston Chorale as a Priority 1 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Springwater Fiber Workshop. Peggy Baggett explained the panel recommendation that the Commission consider whether to continue counting income from the store as eligible revenue for

the General Operating Support grant. Beth Temple agreed that this issue should be discussed in the coming year and made a motion to fund the Springwater Fiber Workshop as a Priority 1 organization. Other Commissioners noted the panel concerns about the lack of business support for this organization and the unclear financial information. The motion was seconded and defeated, Yes- 4, No -6.

Virginia Chamber Orchestra. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendation of Priority 1 funding for this organization. The motion was seconded and approved with David Briggs abstaining.

Washington Shakespeare Company. David Briggs noted that this organization is being harmed by circumstances beyond its control with the delay in construction of the new space for Signature Theatre leading to a postponement in the move of the Washington Shakespeare Company. He made a motion to fund the Company as a Priority 1 organization. The motion was seconded and approved, Yes - 8, No - 2.

World Children's Choir. David Briggs asked about the low ranking for this organization after receiving Priority 1 funding in the past year. The Commission staff responded that the panelists were concerned about some of the language in the application. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to fund the organization as a Priority 2 applicant. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the remaining applications from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVA Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area IVA.

Alexandria Performing Arts Association/Yockadot Theatre. Beth Temple said that while she agreed with the panel comments about the confusing application, this new initiative is an exciting idea and should be encouraged. She made a motion to award a grant of \$2,000, contingent upon action of the General Assembly. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

QuinTango. David Briggs made a motion to award \$1,000 to this project, contingent upon action of the General Assembly and of the organization notifying the Commission staff of at least one concert location in Virginia. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grants from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVB General Operating Support

Bonita Lestina commented that the Area IVB panel did a good job, with a variety of points of view and lively debate on issues. She noted that the majority of the panelists were administrators and that it would be good to have more artists serving on all of the panels.

Aurora Studio Theatre. Several Commissioners commented that it was surprising the panel had recommended Priority 1 funding for this new applicant since the organization does not appear to meet all of the criteria for funding. They noted that the organization should have applied in the Project Grant category. Roddy Moore made a motion to award funding as a Priority 3 organization. The motion was seconded and defeated, Yes - 4, No - 5. Will Trinkle then made a motion to award funding as a Priority 2 organization. The motion was seconded and approved, Yes - 8, No - 2.

Old Bridge Chamber Orchestra. David Briggs stated that the Priority 2 ranking recommended by the panel seemed high, given the concerns about the financial information provided in the application and the small audiences. He made a motion to fund the organization as Priority 3 applicant. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Prince William Symphony. David Briggs noted that this organization has a lengthy history of financial problems. It did not apply to the Commission in two of the last three years and did not send a final report and receive its second grant payment for the year in which it applied. He made a motion to award funding as a Priority 2 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining applications from Area IVB. A The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVB Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area IVB.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Area IVB Project Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area V General Operating Support

No Commissioners observed the Area V panel meeting. Peggy Baggett reported that the meeting had gone well and presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

David Briggs made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support applications from Area V. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area V Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area V.

Scottsville Center for the Arts & Nature. David Briggs noted that there were many questions about this application and made a motion not to fund it. The motion was seconded and passed, Yes - 9, Abstentions - 1.

Sycamore Rouge. David Briggs noted that Petersburg needs more cultural opportunities. He

stated that this new and emerging organization is the type of initiative that the Commission should support. He made a motion to award \$10,000, contingent upon action by the General Assembly. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Will Trinkle then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area V. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Area VI General Operating Support

Rod Tylor stated that the Area VI panel was a diverse group that looked at both details and at the overall picture. Susan Hirschbiel agreed that it was a good panel with a heavy workload.

Norfolk Chamber Consort. Susan Hirschbiel stated that she is familiar with the work of this ensemble, and the artistic quality is high. She made a motion to fund the organization as a Priority 1 applicant. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Suffolk Art League. Rod Taylor spoke of the high artistic standards of this organization. David Briggs made a motion to fund the organization as a Priority 1 applicant. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area VI Project Grants

Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area VI.

Art Song of Williamsburg. Bonita Lestina spoke about the importance of supporting this high quality ensemble. She made a motion to award \$1200 if the Commission has level funding in 2006-2007 and \$1500 if the proposed increase is passed by the General Assembly. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Schola Cantorum. Susan Hirschbiel spoke of the quality of this workshop. Roddy Moore made a motion to award \$500 for scholarships for people who could not otherwise afford to participate. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

E. A. McMath then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

General Operating Support for Major Arts Institutions

Peggy Baggett read comments from Jackie Stone about the panel meeting. Ms. Stone said the panelists took their work seriously and were focused on critical issues.

Fairfax Symphony. Bonita Lestina spoke of the high artistic quality of the orchestra and disagreed with the panelists that visibility in the community is a problem. She made a motion to fund the Symphony as Priority 1 with the organization being reviewed by the advisory panel again in the spring of 2007. Lu Ellsworth added that the organization should be required to complete a new strategic plan within the coming year. The motion was seconded and approved with David Briggs abstaining.

Virginia Symphony. Several Commissioners expressed concern about the lack of specificity in the deficit reduction plan prepared by the Symphony. The Commissioners agreed by consensus that the Symphony should be reviewed by the advisory panel again in the spring of 2007 and that the organization should be required to send a deficit reduction plan with specific targets.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus that the Roanoke Symphony and the Virginia Stage Company should be reviewed by the advisory panel again in the spring of 2007.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining applications in the major arts institutions category. The motion was seconded and approved, with David Briggs abstaining on Signature Theatre.

General Operating Support for Local Arts Agencies

Gary Grant reported that he was impressed with the panelists and their thoughtfulness. Peggy Baggett presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Cultural Alliance of Greater Hampton Roads. There was a lengthy discussion about this application. Some Commissioners felt that the organization had lost visibility and influence in recent years. However, the Commission is trying to strengthen the local arts agencies of the state and it would be counter-productive not to fund this long-time grantee of the Commission. Gary Grant made a motion to award \$2500 to the organization, contingent upon action by the General Assembly, with the funds restricted for organizational development activities. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the remaining applications in this category. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Special Recognition Awards

Will Trinkle made a motion to approved the staff recommendations on the Special Recognition Awards. The motion was seconded and approved with Roddy Moore abstaining.

General Operating Support Short Forms

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the General Operating Support short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining on the Chrysler Museum and Virginia Arts Festival and Gary Grant abstaining on the Danville Museum.

Discussion of Advisory Panels

There was a discussion on ways to strengthen the advisory panels in which the following

suggestions were made.

- The panelist application rating sheets should be redesigned to group comments under the headings of strengths, weaknesses, and observations under each criterion.
- The size of the panels should be increased to nine or ten panelists.
- The panelists should be recruited sooner in the year so that they have time to attend more events.
- The Commissioners will help recruit panelists when requested by the Commission staff.
- The Commission should strive for better geographic balance on the major arts institutions panel.
- Applicants for funding should be encouraged to give complimentary tickets to the panelists and Commissioners.

Local Government Challenge Grants

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve full funding for the Local Government Challenge Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2007-2008 Tour Directory

No Commissioners attended the touring advisory panel meeting. The Commission staff reported that the meeting went well. Peggy Baggett commended staff members Tatjana Beylotte and Amy Krawczyk for identifying several new applicants for the Tour Directory.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the performers to be listed in the 2007-2008 Tour Directory. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Artist Residency Grants

Beth Temple and Rod Taylor reported that the Arts in Education panel meeting went well and that it was a strong panel.

Deborah Valentine made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the Artist Residency applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Discussion of New Criteria for Major Arts Institutions

Peggy Baggett reviewed the materials prepared since the March Commission meeting about funding of the major arts institutions. After discussion the Commissioners agreed by consensus to the following.

- The Commission will not increase funding for the major arts institutions at this time. With the potential of an overall increase in Commission grant funds, all General Operating Support grantees could possibly see an increase in their annual grants.
- When the guidelines for funding are revised for 2008-2010, the Commission will consider raising the cap on the amount requested for the General Operating Support grants.

- The leaders of the large budget arts organizations should be providing leadership on behalf of their fields of the arts and on behalf of all the arts, in addition to being leaders for their own institutions. The Commission will not create an incentive grant program to encourage such leadership.
- A question will be added to the General Operating Support form for the major arts institutions about leadership activities on behalf of the arts as a whole. The Commission will not change the criteria for funding for 2007-2008 but will begin collecting information on leadership activities.
- When the guidelines for funding are revised for 2008-2010, the Commission will consider adding a funding criterion about leadership in the field.
- The Commission will send letters to the board members of the major arts institutions across the state to urge these organizations to take a leadership role in the statewide advocacy effort. The letter will be signed by the Chair of the Commission and the Commissioner representing that area of the state.

Performing Arts Presenters

The Commission discussed alternative actions as a follow up to the statewide survey of performing arts presenters. There was agreement that the Commission should hire a contract employee to create a directory of presenters and performance venues. David Briggs noted the need to determine measures of success for this activity. The Commission agreed by consensus to budget \$15,000 in the coming year for this work. The Executive Committee will review a specific budget after the Commission staff has identified the contractor and the scope of the work.

Approval of Grants Budget

After discussion the Commissioners agreed to add \$8,000 to the Teacher Incentive Grants and move \$1,000 from local arts agency professional development to Poetry Out Loud. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendations including the changes made during the meeting on the 2006-2007 grants budget. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Report of the Nominating Committee

E. A. McMath gave the report of the Nominating Committee which recommended the following slate of officers for 2006-2007:

Chair	Lu Ellsworth
Vice Chair	Beth Temple
Secretary	Deborah Valentine.

Dr. Ellsworth asked Vice Chair Will Trinkle to preside over this section of the agenda. Bonita Lestina made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to accept the slate of officers proposed by the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

2006-2007 Artists Fellowships

Beth Temple made a motion to award artist fellowships in the categories of fiction and photography in 2006-2007. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Deborah Valentine noted that with the proposed budget increase the Commission should consider expanding the number of disciplines in which fellowships are awarded each year.

Reports

Peggy Baggett reported on the public relations workshops and audience development roundtable that are joint projects of the Commission and the Virginians for the Arts Foundation.

Peggy Baggett reported that there will be a meeting of leaders of the arts community with the new Superintendent of Public Instruction in the fall of 2006 to discuss the role of artists and arts organizations in enhancing public education.

Lu Ellsworth reported on the national advocacy efforts and on the NASAA Affiliates Program.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.